

# North & West Clare

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## Dream exposure for Clare artist on RTÉ's hit drama

Derrick Lynch

RENOWED Liscannon-based landscape artist Ann Daly said it has blown her mind to have her work adorning the walls of the many beautiful houses used for RTÉ's hit drama Smother.

Subsequently called on to make her TV debut as an extra on the show, Ann joked, "I couldn't have made this up in my wildest dreams, and they can be pretty wild!"

Inspired by West Clare's dramatic skies and coastline, Ann's paintings reflect the movement and darkness of the sea and the ever changing light.

Her work tends to veer towards the evening sunsets when the light and dark of the skies sometimes crash into magnificent bursts and she's particularly fond of a dramatic skyline, an Atlantic storm and the movement of waves.

She recalled a phone call that came in February last year from the production design manager's assistant, asking if her gallery was open to visit at short notice.

"I knew there was filming on a new BBC/RTÉ drama and a lot of excitement about in Lahinch and surrounding areas and had my name down as an extra, but was not expecting this."

"When the production designer came in looked around and said 'yep I want this, this, this, and this if we may, to use in our character sets in Smother', I was blown away to think of all my work being on television," said Ann.

Ann features in a number of scenes in Smother and meeting the entire cast and crew, including lead actors Dervla Kirwan and Graham Byrnes was a personal highlight.



Artist Ann Daly of the Atlantic Way Gallery in Liscannon with her dogs Penny and Tessie.

Photograph by John Kelly

Not knowing Ann was the artist that adorned the walls, the cast were very impressed when told, with many chatting with her about her work and others visiting her gallery (pre-Covid 19) including Dervla, Graham

and Conor Mullen.

"The work was collected and couldn't have been placed in a more beautiful setting than Moy House on the cliff overlooking Lahinch Bay. The paintings looked like they belonged. The next thing I knew I was called to

be an extra and it blew my mind. I was going to be in Smother along with my paintings."

When Covid-19 hit, filming was suspended and the gallery closed, meaning like everyone else in the country, worry and uncertainty loomed for Ann.

She used this time to work on her art from her home, missing her family, her gallery and filming, but drawing inspiration from the mood of the country and her stunning surroundings.

Once lockdown restrictions were lifted last summer, her gal-

lery was back open in Liscannon, but with no international tourists she relied heavily on the local community and thankfully the Irish staycationers were incredibly supportive.

"It turns out my paintings were used in all the character's

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homes with one commissioned especially for a scene and I was called again as an extra and had my first Covid test which mandatory for set.

"It was a great experience and honour to be involved and be the artist on the walls with such a brilliant cast and crew in a drama set along the magnificent west coast of Clare" she said.

For Ann, Clare's west coast and the sea encapsulates everything she wants to paint: family, home, memories, longing and hope. It's all painted with thick palette knife impasto oils giving texture, with paint on the waves falling off the canvas which gives the viewer a yearning to touch, but can't. To see more of Ann's work visit [www.ann Daly.ie/](http://www.ann Daly.ie/)

### Switch to cafe and bakery from shop approved

Owen Ryan

AN Bord Pleanála has upheld a decision by Clare County Council to grant planning permission for the change of use of a premises from a shop to a cafe/bakery at 9 Fionóra, Kettle Street, Lahinch.

According to the inspector's report, a third party appeal had been lodged by the Fionóra Management Company.

The appeal claimed that a bakery would not be a compatible within mixed use zoning, with early hours and odour being likely problems.

Among the points it made were that, in its view, "The mixed use development (P04/578) is part of what was developed as a residential development with one small retail unit to ensure protection of the residential amenities of properties within the overall development."

"Condition no. 9 of this permission prohibits emissions (noise, odours etc.) that would be detrimental to residential amenity and such is part of leasehold terms and conditions for occupiers of the development."

It also claimed, "The change of use would have an adverse impact on the residential amenities of the existing residents and although zoned mixed use the context of its location within the existing residential scheme should be taken into account."

However the inspector found that the development is in keeping with the area.

In their report, they noted, "The appeal site is within the mixed use zoning, which is the zoning that defines town centre and as such there is expectation that residential development in this zoning will be at close quarters with commercial development with residential above shop units and commercial premises commonplace."

The inspector stated the nature and scale of the operation would not be out of proportion relative to the adjoining development and was, to a degree, limited by the size of the unit itself.

"I would consider that subject to appropriate operating hours and the measures proposed to prevent odours, the proposal would be satisfactory in the context of adjoining residential amenity."

Regarding odours, the inspector welcomed the proposal for a carbon filtration extraction system, the specifications of which were outlined including details of the location of its output.

They further noted, "The applicant has specified that the operating hours start at 5am however the condition applied by the Council restricts operating hours to 6am on weekdays and 7am on Sundays and Bank Holidays. I would consider that the operating hours specified by the Council are appropriate in this regard."

Planning permission was allowed, subject to a number of conditions.

## Falls leads green charge with carbon neutral status

Derrick Lynch

WHEN the Falls Hotel & Spa in Ennistymon reopens later this year, guests will leave no carbon footprint once they step foot on hotel grounds, thanks to a series of waste reduction and innovative energy initiatives on the property.

The 140-bedroom hotel which is located in the scenic Burren and Cliff of Moher UNESCO Global Geopark and a member of the Burren Ecotourism Network, the McCarthy family were conscious of trying to reduce their environmental impact on the area around them. The move to renewable energy was also driven by demand from guests, locals and staff.

Michael McCarthy, General Manager, Falls Hotel, said "We are delighted to receive this recognition, especially given the huge investment we have made with our hydroelectric plant."

"We are extremely proud of this award. With 140 bedrooms, a leisure centre and a spa com-

plex, we went from having a large carbon footprint to being carbon neutral in five short years; it's a massive achievement.

"Being based in an area of such natural beauty, as the Burren, we felt compelled to do our best to minimise our impact on the area around us. Utilising the power of the river alongside us seemed the best place to start our sustainability journey."

The idea of harnessing energy from the nearby river Inagh is not new. In the 1960s the hotel's previous owners Bridget and John F Woods recognised the potential of the cascades to generate electricity for the then 20-bedroom hotel.

The couple had installed a 30 kWh hydroelectric plant on the site, which was then upgraded by the McCarthy family into the current 220 kWh hydroelectric turbine.

A year after it was completed in 2019 the property had reduced its energy consumption by 830,000

kWh of electricity.

This counteracts the emission of an estimated 550 tonnes of carbon and is the equivalent of offsetting three return trips, by car, to the moon.

The 220kw turbine which is located next to the Inagh river provides up to 70% of the hotel's annual energy needs. In winter this can reach 100%, when the river is in full flow. During drier spells, the hotel tops its energy from renewable electricity sources.

Any excess electricity will be sold back to the national grid or there are plans to install a battery unit which can store electricity which can be used by the hotel later.

Sustainability not only guides



John McCarthy, at the turbine which allows the Falls Hotel generate most of its electricity.

the management of all operations at the hotel, but is at the heart of the guest experience.

All guests are also encouraged to play their part, whether it's reusing towels, using less water, turning off lights and heat or dividing their rubbish into separate bins in their rooms. It's all part of a concerted effort to educate visitors on the importance of sustainability.

The story of the hotel's journey to sustainability will be told on storyboards located around the hotel and next to the hydro-electric pump house beside the river.

More trees will be planted annually and guests will be encouraged to offset their own carbon footprint by adopting a tree.

"It is our responsibility to take direct action to minimise our environmental footprint and we have additional plans to further reduce our absolute consumption and drive even greater levels of sustainability within the hotel" Mr McCarthy added.

## Promotional video series puts Burren folk in spotlight

Fiona McGarry

A RARE insight into the people who live and work in the Burren will be revealed in a series of 60

short films being launched by the Burren Ecotourism Network.

The series entitled 'The People of the Burren' will give potential visitors a chance to experience the diverse history, geology, archaeology, food and music of the area through the unique perspective of the people who live there.

As well as interviews, the films also showcase the stunning landscapes of the Burren. Over the next few months, the films will be released on a regular basis and will be available to view on the network's social media channels and on Burren.ie.

The video stories are part of an ongoing marketing campaign to encourage visitors to the area, once restrictions are lifted.

"This campaign will be directed towards the domestic and Northern Irish Markets, both of whom we hope will be able to travel to Clare this summer," said Jarlath O'Dwyer, CEO of the Burren Ecotourism Network.

"The booking patterns for July and August, so far, are indicating that Irish visitors plan to stay in the same area for longer than other years, and that is why we want to create high awareness of the variety and diversity of the offering here in the Burren and Cliffs of Moher UNESCO Global



Left: Cameraman Paul Corey recording an interview, and right, Eva Hegarty of Burren Glamping, taking part in the production of a series of short films entitled 'The People of the Burren'.

Geopark. "We are embarking on this promotional drive based on the information that we have around restrictions, and with a view to extending the season in the region into September and October of 2021.

"Like everyone else, we really hope the pandemic will have been brought under control long before that."

The Burren Ecotourism Network has more than 70 members, which include well-known tourist attractions, such as the Cliffs of

Moher and the Ailwee Caves, to lesser-known experiences such as guided walks led by tour guide Cormac McGinley.

The films will also form part of a new content bank that will be used to promote the Burren and Cliffs of Moher UNESCO Global

Geopark on social media and online.

Already, the high quality of the films have attracted the attention of Tourism Ireland and Fáilte Ireland.

Both government bodies are interested in sharing the films

on their social media channels, which will potentially see the films reaching millions of viewers, worldwide.

The initiative is co-funded by LEADER as part of the Destination Marketing Programme with support from the Clare Local

Development Company (CLDC). In recent weeks, TV programmes such as 'Smother' set in Lahinch, 'Creedon's Atlas of Ireland' and the documentary, 'The Burren: Heart of Stone' have all put the Burren firmly in the spotlight.

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